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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [UNSC](#) [UNMIK](#) [KIRF](#) [EU](#) [KV](#) [YI](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA NOT PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO AT OIC
SUMMIT

REF: A. SECSTATE 22377
[1](#)B. ABUJA 344
[1](#)C. ABUJA 436
[1](#)D. 07 ABUJA 1327

Classified By: PolCouns Walter Pflaumer for Reasons 1.4 (b & d).

[1](#)1. (U) PolOff delivered Ref A demarche to Bernard Shabu, Assistant Director of Intra-Regional and Inter-Regional Affairs and Desk Officer for Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on March

[1](#)7. Shabu informed PolOff that President Umaru Yar'Adua, accompanied by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Tijjani Kaura and Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, would lead the Government of Nigeria (GON) delegation to the March 13-14 OIC Islamic Summit in Senegal. Shabu said the President is expected to leave for the Summit on March 12, and that First Lady Hajiya Turai Yar'Adua may likely attend as well.

[1](#)2. (C) Shabu said the GON had not yet taken a position on Kosovo's independence (Ref B), and was not yet in a position to express support for Kosovo's independence at the OIC Summit. Shabu said President Yar'Adua, in consultation with the FornMin, was likely to discuss the issue ahead of the Summit.

[1](#)3. (C) Shabu told PolOff that the GON welcomed the appointment of U.S. Special Envoy to the OIC, Sada Cumber (Ref C), and looked forward to meeting with Cumber at the margins of the Summit.

[1](#)4. (C//NF) Since Nigeria joined the OIC in 1986, this will be the first time a Nigerian Head of State will attend the OIC Islamic Summit (Ref D). Shabu said, given the delicate religious sensibilities and diverse makeup of Nigerian society, the GON has had to maintain a low-key approach to the OIC, and has tried to be seen as not "too active" on Islamic issues. While Shabu acknowledged that Nigeria is determined to pursue greater engagement with the OIC under the Yar'Adua administration, particularly vis-a-vis attracting investment and trade with OIC countries, he discounted any link between this and Yar'Adua being a Muslim president, claiming it was purely coincidental that the GON is now interested in active engagement with the OIC. Shabu told PolOff the GON may soon designate a Nigerian official to serve as the GON's permanent representative to the OIC, rather than a Desk Officer like himself who works broadly on

the GON's membership in international organizations.
(Comment: If the GON is, in fact, interested in raising its profile within the OIC, designating a permanent representative to work OIC issues would help appreciably. The GON has not heretofore publicly pursued active engagement in the OIC given Nigeria's delicate Christian-Muslim dynamic; attempts to do so through official designation of a permanent representative may draw criticism from Christian leaders in Nigeria. End Comment.)
SANDERS